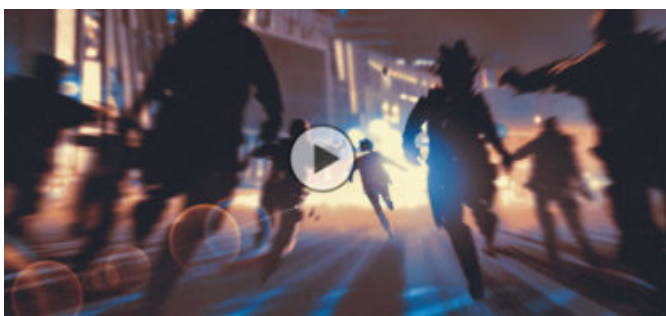


# Colt Stops Manufacturing The Civilian AR-15

*In what to some might seem a shocking move, Colt, one of America's most iconic firearm manufacturers, is shutting down manufacturing of its three civilian models of the popular AR-15 sport rifle.*

Colt has been in business since it was founded by Samuel Colt in 1836, originally open to manufacture the revolver which he had patented. Yet it was Colt which was responsible for the AR-15 being on the market in the first place. When Arma-Lite couldn't sell their design to the Army, they sold the design rights to Colt instead, along with the older AR-10. It was Colt who first made a success of this rifle, selling it as the M-16 to the US military.

Colt quotes declining sales of their AR-15 models as the reason for this change. That may sound surprising, considering that the various variants of the AR-15 are the most popular rifle on the market. However, this popularity has led many small manufacturers to enter the arena, producing their own versions of the AR-15, often at substantially reduced prices.



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The fact of the matter is, anyone can build an AR-15, without needing a massive machine shop to do so. I've built one myself. The modularity of the gun's design, along with the large number of after-market parts manufacturers producing quality parts, mean that the only part which needs to be

specially fabricated by a licensed firearms manufacturer is the lower receiver. This has led to their being roughly 500 manufactures of the rifle, oversaturating (according to Colt) the market with their popular wares.

## **The Most Controversial Gun on the Market**

Invariably, there will be some in the anti-gun crowd who will see this as a win for their side, when in fact it is not. There are still something like 16 million AR-15s in the hands of law-abiding citizens and just about every gun store in the country stocks various different models.

Even so, this is the gun that the anti-gun crowd loves to go after, mislabeling it an “assault rifle,” as well as attributing amazing abilities to it, such as Representative Shiela Jackson’s recent gaffe, saying that the AR-15 was as heavy as 10 boxes that you might be moving and shoots a .50 caliber bullet. Yet, as many have since told her, it is a rather lightweight rifle that only shoots a .223 caliber round. Even though it can be chambered for a variety of rounds, it can’t be chambered as a .50 caliber.

What has made the AR-15 so controversial is that it looks like a military firearm. While it isn’t the only modern rifle out there which looks like military hardware, the design of the AR-15 comes closer to that of actual military firearms than any other. This makes it look “scary” to those who don’t understand firearms, giving them the emotional impetus they need to go after it.

Actually, Arma-Lite, the original designer of the AR-15 and the source of the “AR” in its name, originally designed a select-fire (fully automatic fire capable) AR-15 rifle for the military. However, it was never a success. When they couldn’t sell their product to the government, the company sold the

design to Colt. After some redesign, the now renamed M-16 became the standard military rifle for all four branches of service in 1965, replacing the venerable M-14.

It wasn't until a couple of decades later that the AR-15 was reborn; this time, as a civilian rifle. The M-16 had become so iconic, that the AR-15 was developed to be a semi-automatic version, specially made for the civilian market. Sales of this rifle started in 1989.

But the AR-15 didn't stay on the market continually. Five years later, in 1994, the Federal Assault Weapons Ban made it illegal to sell the AR-15 to civilians. When that law expired in 2004, after no noticeable reduction in violent crimes, the rifle returned to the market. Since then, it has been under almost constant attack, especially since the rate of mass shootings increased in 2012.

Amongst the mistaken information propagated about the AR-15, which has kept it in the midst of controversy, is:



- That "AR" stands for "assault rifle." It doesn't; it

stands for "Arma-Lite" the company that first designed it.

- That the AR-15 is a fully-automatic rifle. It's not; it's semi-automatic.
- That the AR-15 can sustain extremely high rates of fully-automatic fire. It can only do this with "bump fire," which can be accomplished with a hair band or belt loop. Of course, once the magazine runs out, that stops.
- That the caliber or hole that the AR-15 produces is anywhere from 2" to 16". It's actually quite small at .223 inches, just .003 inches more than a .22LR round.
- That the AR-15 is the deadliest rifle there is. Yet it is considered inadequate for hunting anything larger than a coyote.
- That the AR-15 was designed only for killing. It wasn't; it was designed to be a sport rifle; in other words, for pleasure and competitive shooting.
- That a huge number of crimes, especially mass shootings, are committed with the AR-15. While there have been a few mass shootings where the killer used an AR-15, the claim is still not true, as most crimes are committed with pistols.

Whether these sorts of statements are made out of ignorance, fear mongering or are outright lies is basically immaterial. The people making these statements are all on the same side of the political line and they all want to outlaw this gun as fast as they can. They see it as a symbolic representation of everything they think is wrong with guns and attack it with that in mind.

Some versions of these attacks are more subtle, such as those trying to limit the number of "military" features on the AR-15. Things like pistol grips, removable magazines, bayonet lugs, adjustable stocks, and rails are all seen as making the gun more dangerous, even though they don't. Yet they are held

up as examples of why this is a “dangerous military rifle.”

While Colt’s dropping of the AR-15 from their line is an emotional blow to gun owners everywhere, ultimately, their decision doesn’t make a difference. The number of AR-15s in civilian hands won’t go down, nor will the sales of this popular rifle diminish. If anything, they will continue to increase.

## **It’s the Results that Count**

The AR-15s popularity isn’t due to it being a military-styled firearm; but rather, to its effectiveness as a firearm. Of all the rifles manufactured today, this is the single most versatile. It only takes minutes to change the configuration, including changes to the caliber and barrel length. Other modifications, like adding a vertical foregrip or different optics are even easier.

Granted, most of these options were developed for military use in the first place. But why did the military want them? That boils down to the massive variety of missions that the M-16 and M-4, the current military iteration of this rifle design, are used for. Close-quarters combat is considerably different than fighting in the jungle and the needs of the rifle change. Likewise, using an AR-15 for competitive tactical shooting or using it for hunting small game require different gun configurations.

Many of the features which anti-gunners complain about have no more sinister purpose than to make the gun easier to use. The vertical foregrip and pistol grip are both ergonomic replacements for the more conventional rifle stock and forestock. The same can be said for the adjustable length of the stock, yet these are the things which those who don’t understand their purpose say make the gun “more dangerous,” wanting to limit the legality of such features on civilian firearms.

Colt may be have found a way to get out of the controversy that has surrounded the AR-15, but that doesn't mean that the controversy will end in any way. If anything, their actions today will merely fuel the debate, as their stated reason for this business decision won't be believed by either side.

In the mean time, sales of the AR-15 will continue, against the wishes of politicians like "Beto" O'Rourke, who has clearly stated his intent to eliminate them if he wins the White House. And now that he has broken the ice, coming forth to state the Democrat's position clearly, others are following suit.

Sales will continue because there are very good reasons for the AR-15's popularity; reasons which have nothing to do with the false narrative painted about it. Rather, they have a lot to do with the excellent design of the rifle and its ease of use.

There is no better rifle on the market for teaching young shooters how to shoot. Even the many designs of .22LR rifles can't do that. While the .22 is an excellent cartridge for learning on, unless we're talking about a .22 caliber AR-15, the rifle just isn't as easy to shoot. The same ergonomic advantages which are labeled as "scary military features" are the very ones which make this an ideal firearm for young shooters to learn on. Then, when they step up to larger calibers, the low recoil of the AR-15 is even better, helping them to control the gun.

## **But There's More...**

The real battle over the AR-15 and the real value of it being on the market, is that it best fulfills the intent of our Constitution's framers, when they included the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights.

"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of

a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed”

In the text of the Amendment, it is clear that the Founding Fathers were concerned about the need for a militia, a group of citizens, who would turn out as soldiers, should the need arise to protect their homes, cities and country. That shouldn't be the least bit surprising, as the militia of the colonies which became the United States had just joined together to defeat the most powerful army on the face of the Earth and win the Revolutionary War.

That army of militiamen won that war, with the majority of them using weapons much like those of their enemy, the musket. But the deciding factor in that war was probably the superior arms in the hands of a small group of frontiersmen who were part of that army. Those frontiersmen were armed with the Kentucky Long Rifle, the most modern and accurate long gun of the day.



What made the Kentucky Long Rifle such an effective firearm was a combination of a longer barrel, which was rifled, whereas the muskets were smooth-bore weapons. The Kentucky also used a smaller bullet, which was cast to fit the barrel of the rifle,

allowing the rifling to spin the bullet and give it more stability. This allowed American marksmen using this iconic rifle greater accuracy, giving birth to the battlefield sniper and the amazing impact they could have in battle.

It's important to note several things here:

- The Revolutionary War was a war against tyranny or government overreach.
- The Second Amendment was clearly created with the idea of there being a need for another revolution, sometime in the future.
- It was the militia of the Colonies who won that war, against the world's greatest standing army.
- Those in the militia who were of the greatest impact were marksmen using their own rifles, which were superior to those used by the professional soldiers.
- Snipers have always been employed, ever since George Washington invented the idea in the Revolutionary War, to target officers, disrupting command and control and giving their side the advantage of fighting against a disorganized enemy.
- Snipers take carefully aimed, individual shots at specific targets. By comparison, the infantry expended over 300 rounds, during the Vietnam War, for every casualty they caused.

Taking these together, the arguments about the Second Amendment only existing to allow for muskets, allow us to hunt or even allow us to defend ourselves are all ridiculous. It seems rather clear, that in the minds of the Founding Fathers, it would be necessary for the citizens of the new United States to defend their freedom from an overbearing, tyrannical government at some point in time. They wanted the people to have the ability to do just that.

Now, I ask you, is there any other rifle currently being manufactured, which offers the citizens of these United States, a better opportunity to do that, than the one which has been designed to incorporate as many features as legally possible, as the rifles that the military uses, even though it does not offer select fire capability?

That's why we need the AR-15 and why Colt's decision is so important to freedom-loving Americans.





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